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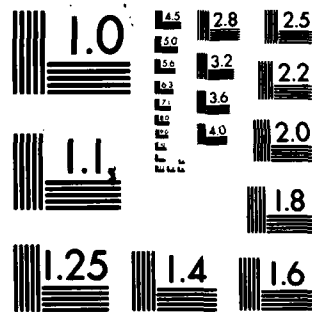
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THE SOVIET MILITARY AND ARMS CONTROL

(10) Douglas F. Garthoff

(11) March 1977

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE MILITARY AND SOME EXAMPLES OF ARMS CONTROL	3
The 1950s	
The Limited Test Ban	
SALT	
An Additional Role	
THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS	12
THE MILITARY AND THE DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE	15
Defense Planning and Arms Control	
The Politburo	
The Defense Council	
Other Organizations	
RECENT LEADERSHIP CHANGES	24
Brezhnev	
Grechko's Role	
Ustinov	
Ogarkov	
CONCLUSIONS	34
The Military's Attitude toward Arms Control	
A Look Ahead	

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Any effort to examine the attitudes and role of the Soviet military in arms control matters would be remiss not to point out the impossibility for Western observers to reach clear-cut, let alone definitive conclusions. The available data is simply inadequate to that task in the face of continuing Soviet secrecy about the USSR's political process and defense matters. To cite with reference to SALT but one example of this difficulty involving both attitudes and role, we do not know whether the military had more influence on the Soviet acceptance of the 1972 interim agreement on offensive weapons, at a time when Grechko was not in the Politburo and no professional military figures apparently participated directly in the Moscow summit meetings, or on the Soviet acceptance of the 1974 guidelines on offensive weapons, when Grechko had been on the Politburo for a year and a half and senior military representatives did take part in the Vladivostok summit.

It should also be noted at the outset that the military do not necessarily think and act as a unified interest group on arms control. The various service branches are affected in different degree by individual measures, and in some cases not at all. Service branch rivalry is generally thought to be less in the USSR than in the US, but arms control would seem to present particularly strong

pressures that could arouse intra-military differences which might not be contained by a tacit or agreed "one for all, all for one" approach by the military. In any case, the military voice on arms control is coordinated, probably within the General Staff of the Defense Ministry, and expressed at the highest levels by senior spokesmen above branch levels, most authoritatively of course by the Defense Minister.

Also worthy of mention is the peculiar nature of arms control as a policy issue. Malcolm Mackintosh has reminded us that the military plays different roles in affecting defense policy and foreign policy, the former being more naturally and legitimately subject to military influence.¹ Arms control cuts across these two policy areas, with some measures more closely related to strictly military needs than others. No one could logically deny the Politburo's need for expert military advice in reaching a decision whether to accept the 1972 ABM Treaty. But the admixture of political factors also bearing on that decision, perhaps including elements in competition with the military's advice, eludes exact definition, and on a

¹Malcolm Mackintosh, "The Soviet Military: Influence on Foreign Policy," Problems of Communism, September-October 1973, pp. 1-2.

matter such as the "hot line" agreement or a nuclear non-proliferation measure the strictly military influence might be virtually nil.

The general impression gained from both logic and what evidence there is points to the military as taking a cautious, conservative viewpoint on arms control, sometimes clearly more so than the political leadership. Presumably differences over particular policies under deliberation--though rarely if ever political conflict--occur as a result. The record seems clearer on the former point (general attitude) than on the latter (actual policy clashes).

The Military and Some Examples of Arms Control

The 1950s. There are no examples where we are aware that the Soviet military initiated or acted as the principal proponent for a significant arms control measure. On the contrary, the political leadership initiates such policies and often the military at least starts off opposed to the effort. Some of the Soviet arms control and disarmament initiatives of the mid-1950s seem so self-serving to Soviet national security interests, however, that in retrospect one might well wonder whether the military at least exercised controlling influence in setting their terms. The no first use of nuclear weapons (in a period

of Soviet conventional superiority and nuclear inferiority) and the observation of enemy airfields (at a time when the strategic value and relative military capability of the US Strategic Air Command was at its height) proposals were so obviously to Soviet military advantage that the West never seriously considered them as a reasonable basis for negotiations. Even the more political Soviet campaign for general and complete disarmament in the late 1950s very possibly had positive military support given its unrealistic nature. In effect, the more radical or sweeping the measure, the more the Soviet military could live with it. Yet these early Soviet proposals did set the precedent of seeking a way other than simply building arms to counter Western military strength.

At this time East-West arms control negotiations were drawn-out inconclusive affairs. Soviet military representatives did attend some negotiations as advisers, but their presence was generally marked by stolid silence and did not involve direct high-level participation. The East-West political atmosphere, although punctuated by the 1955 "spirit of Geneva" and the 1959 "spirit of Camp David," was generally dominated by mutual hostility and poisoned by Soviet "rocket rattling" and threats on Berlin. The strategic balance favored the West, and the Soviets were unwilling to agree to arms control measures unless

the West would sacrifice actual military advantages.

The Limited Test Ban. By 1963 some of these equations had shifted. The strategic balance was all the more clearly to Western advantage, and had been shown to be so by the Soviet attempt to achieve parity via the Cuban missile venture. But at least one element of nuclear parity had appeared--nuclear test program capabilities. By the late 1950s the Soviets were ready to cease nuclear testing altogether on a mutual basis, and by 1963 willing to accept a ban that allowed underground testing, evidently confident that their techniques had progressed enough to permit them to compete without disadvantage in that environment alone. The political atmosphere was in a state of shock following the October 1962 crisis, but did achieve a certain kind of benchmark in mid-1963 (this time it was the "spirit of Moscow") when the US, UK, and USSR signed the limited nuclear test ban treaty, the first major East-West arms control agreement--(the first "hot line" agreement had been signed a month and a half earlier).

In the months leading up to the Soviet acceptance of the limited test ban Khrushchev told Westerners that his "atomic scientists" were urging him to resume testing. But there is evidence that the Soviet military were pressing Khrushchev, too, by registering their objections to

the test ban. Before the Soviets accepted the limited ban Defense Minister Marshal Malinovsky used noticeably cooler language to describe the prospect for such a treaty than did Khrushchev.² Once the pact was agreed, the military newspaper Red Star kept silent about the negotiating success between the initialing and signature phases (although it was noted in other central Soviet newspapers), singled out examples of "harder" US commentary on it (Edward Teller, Barry Goldwater, Nelson Rockefeller, and the US military), and cited continuing US underground testing (other Soviet press organs forebore such mention).

We do not know how strongly the military may have explicitly voiced its objections, or in just what forum or manner. This was not a period of smooth political-military relations: Marshal Biryuzov had been put at the head of the General Staff by Khrushchev a few months prior to the test ban agreement. The services most likely to have objected would have been the Air Defense and Strategic

²In major speeches Malinovsky balanced his references to the ban with warnings of the continuing Western threat and linked the test ban to an unpromising measure. Khrushchev had been more unreservedly enthusiastic about the test ban and had treated it separately.

Rocket Forces.³ But the second edition of the then definitive Soviet treatise on military strategy, in warning that the USSR cannot depend on Western "good will" for its security, voiced a concern that the military as a whole probably shared: the Soviet political leadership must not be misled from the path of achieving equality or superiority in negotiating arms control agreements.⁴ And, after the 1962 Cuban crisis, along with Soviet acceptance of the limited nuclear test ban, a major Soviet strategic build-up was undertaken which became evident some time later and helped to prepare the way for Soviet participation in SALT.

SALT. With the advent of the bilateral US-USSR talks on strategic arms limitations in 1969 the Soviet military acquired their first direct major participation in international arms control negotiation. This has led in turn to their participation in summit-level talks as well, in Moscow and Vladivostok in 1974, and to the novel circumstance that the current Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Ogarkov, has talked on military-strategic matters extensively with knowledgeable high-ranking US diplomatic

³ See Alexander Dallin, et al., The Soviet Union, Arms Control, and Disarmament, New York, School of International Affairs, Columbia University, 1964, p. 90.

⁴ V. D. Sokolovsky, Voennaya strategiya, 2d ed., Moscow Voenizdat, 1963, pp. 7-8.

and military representatives and is personally acquainted with the present US Secretary of Defense. Ogarkov was the second-ranking member of the Soviet SALT delegation during the first three sessions of SALT and in 1971 was elected a full member of the CPSU Central Committee, thus politically out-ranking Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Semenov, the delegation head (who remained a candidate member through the 24th and 25th Party Congresses).⁵

The role of the Soviet military in SALT has been covered as well as present evidence allows elsewhere.⁶ But since SALT is clearly the most important arms control matter for the Soviet military and one in which they have such an important stake, a review of some salient points seems essential to our present discussion.

The military looked upon SALT, especially initially, with reserve and suspicion. No doubt the political leadership did too, but the lack of references to SALT in

⁵The military has also participated in the MBFR talks, but with officers of lower rank than their principal representatives at SALT. MBFR is another arms control issue that involves a combination of Soviet political and military interests, and if greater attention is given to it by the two sides in the future, signs of greater Soviet military interest and involvement could appear.

⁶See especially Raymond L. Garthoff, "SALT and the Soviet Military," Problems of Communism, January-February 1975, pp. 21-37. See also Thomas W. Wolfe, The SALT Experience: Its Impact on U.S. and Soviet Strategic Policy and Decisionmaking, Santa Monica, California, RAND, September 1975.

military publications indicates a special reserve. In general, the Soviet military wanted to keep their own building and development programs as unrestricted as possible and to avoid creating any military disadvantages for themselves while seeking to restrain US programs and to avoid giving the US military advantages.

Preventing the US from building a large ABM system was probably the most important specific goal for both the military and the political leaders. Here the interests of the Air Defense Forces in building Soviet ABMs may have been voiced in terms of an objection to an ABM treaty, but the military as well as the political leadership probably viewed the aim of preventing a US system as more important. The Soviets agreed to significant restrictions on ABMs despite some Soviet military opposition. The existing Soviet ABM system was, however, permitted to remain--again probably because both military and political leaders wanted it as a defense against third-country strikes or accident.

The coincidence of SALT and the Soviet achievement of rough strategic parity with the US is probably, as the Soviets are wont to say, "not accidental." The confidence required to enter into a joint endeavor such as SALT, with its potentially far-reaching consequences, can come only from having a strong position. While this subject is

itself worthy of a separate study, we may note here that the changed strategic situation gives a new ring to the military's long-time argument that "imperialism" can be deflected from "aggressive" actions only through the buildup of countervailing power. Logically, if that "shift" in the world "correlation of forces" has occurred, avoiding confrontation and war should be more possible than before, and the simultaneous emergence of a political "détente" with SALT seemed at least for a while to emphasize this point. Parity could also enhance the chances for future agreements. But that judgment must be tempered with the observation that parity could also increase the temptation of the formerly inferior power to strive for a margin of "superiority."

Finally, we should note that Soviet political-military relations seem to have been fairly smooth throughout the period of SALT. A number of things have helped bring this about, including Brezhnev's apparently close association with Grechko and an extensive buildup of Soviet military strength simultaneously with SALT. To what extent this reflects a congruence of aims or a trading off of interests is difficult to judge. But the military's active role throughout SALT has probably been a significant factor contributing to the lack of friction in their acceptance of the Soviet participation in SALT and the agreements that have been reached.

An Additional Role. The Soviet military has in recent years acquired a direct and ongoing role in the implementation and monitoring aspects of some agreed arms control measures. Whereas the Western side has used civilian diplomatic channels to provide advance notification to the Warsaw Pact powers of military maneuvers, for instance, the Soviets have chosen to have the Defense Ministry notify the accredited military attachés of the NATO powers. The military probably are suspicious of Western intentions with respect to "confidence-building measures," and they may have insisted on having a direct role in implementing such measures. Also, the chief Soviet representative to the Standing Consultative Commission established to check into compliance of the 1972 SALT agreements is a military officer (his American counterpart has been a civilian). This particular function could, of course, serve to deepen rather than to allay the existing suspicions of the military about US programs, capabilities, and purposes in arms control. But it is a function in which the military would be much involved in any case, and it may serve over time to accustom the professional military to think increasingly about strategic programs in the context of mutual arms control measures.

The Importance of Doctrinal Concepts

One of the reasons the military is wary about arms control is that they fear the political leadership will be led by fear of nuclear warfare or by trust regarding Western intentions to rely too much on arms control agreements rather than actual military might in safeguarding Soviet national security. This fear that too much trust will be placed in arms control is of course not limited to the military. Domestic Soviet radio "answers" to "listeners' questions" indicate that public Soviet sentiment, like elements of public opinion in the West, reflects some worry about "unilateral disarmament." But the military feel this concern in special measure for a variety of reasons; from their unique professional responsibility to concentrate on and prepare for possible military dangers to the threat to their budgets and basic role implied in the ultimate aims of arms control and disarmament.

Evidence of this concern has appeared in doctrinal discussions involving military commentators that have occurred since Stalin's death. These discussions revolve around the implications of the existence of nuclear weapon arsenals by both East and West, and they bear directly on arms control policy. The most important doctrinal disputes center on the twin questions of whether war remains a rational continuation of national policy and can be "won"

in the nuclear age and whether it is possible to avoid future major wars despite the continuing existence of a strong "capitalist" enemy.

An arms control measure that has aroused strong statements pro and con from political and military commentators respectively is the 1973 US-USSR Prevention of Nuclear War Agreement (signed symbolically on 22 June), an accord that does not directly affect weapons levels, arms budgets, or other tangible interests of the Soviet military. A prominent military writer referred explicitly to the existence of differences of opinion about the value of this agreement and reaffirmed the current validity of Clausewitz's famous definition of war as the continuation of policy.⁷ At least part of the cause for his statements is probably to be found in an article written a month earlier by a prominent political commentator that put the opposite case in strong terms, referring to the summit agreement as a "real platform" needed as a basis for "mutual understanding and mutual trust" and asserting that "it is impossible to consider a general nuclear-missile war as a means of attaining any sort of political objective."⁸

⁷Col. I. Sidel'nikov, "Peaceful Coexistence and the Security of Peoples," Krasnaya zvezda, 14 August 1973.

⁸A. Bovin, "Peace is Winning Out," Izvestiya, 11 July 1973. Another strong attack on Clausewitz, which characterizes his definition of war as representing "the peak of bourgeois military-theoretical thinking," appears in T. R. Kondratkov, "The Social-Philosophical Aspects of the Problem of War and Peace," Voprosy filosofii, No. 4, 1975, p. 15.

It is thought by some that thorough joint discussions of Soviet and Western strategic concepts will advance mutual confidence and arms control and may even lead to adoption of common definitions for the two sides. While this may be an idea worth pursuing, and some Soviet academics would probably be interested in undertaking such projects, the Soviet military would probably be a reluctant and suspicious participant. If they did take part, however, they could hardly escape some effects from the process of mutual education, to the extent that this occurred.

Early resolution of these doctrinal disputes is not likely. On the contrary, along with official estimates of military matters such as US strength and the strategic balance, doctrinal statements are one of the vehicles of indirect influence exercised by the military on Soviet arms control policy. While on general questions such as the nature of war or the enemy the military must compete with non-military commentators, some of whom have considerable political influence themselves, efforts by the military to make war in the nuclear age "adhere to the class principle" will probably continue. The ebb and flow of these debates will remain very much dependent on the state of internal Soviet politics, the political-military relationship, and the international situation.

The Military and the Decision-making Structure

Critical to an examination of how the military exercises influence in Soviet arms control policy-making is an understanding of the organizational context in which such policy decisions are made. Unfortunately, while we have a fairly good idea of what institutions--political, military, economic, and academic--are involved, we do not know precisely how they relate to each other. The relative weights of the various organizations involved in making decisions depend heavily upon the personal roles of their leaders, which are affected by their political and personal interrelationships and perhaps even their health at any given moment, and there is little specific information on this subject. Additional factors include the differing functions of individual institutions and the status of programs that would be affected by whatever arms control policies are being considered. The specific measures themselves would call for different mixes of institutional influence. Some types of arms control measures (e.g. banning "futuristic" weapons or missile testing, or a comprehensive nuclear test ban) would significantly affect scientists and weapons builders, while others (e.g. troop cuts in Europe, or a lowered ceiling on numbers of strategic weapons) would involve more the business of strategists and line military officers.

Defense Planning and Arms Control. There is little doubt that arms control policy-making is closely related in the USSR to national defense planning. The unquestioned legitimacy of the military's large influence in defense matters provides them with a direct and powerful lever for affecting Soviet arms control policy. Defense plans and programs are a bedrock concern of the entire Soviet leadership, and the injection of arms control considerations into national defense planning has not led to a reduced military role in such planning or to reduced defense spending overall.

Once under way, Soviet arms programs are hard to stop. Some changes of programs in progress do occur. These changes have not usually come about because of joint arms control measures, however, but for reasons related to their effectiveness.⁹ With considerable justification Malcolm Mackintosh some years ago pointed out that: "the best contribution which Soviet military power can make to foreign policy is in the field of skilful co-ordination of defence and disarmament policies."¹⁰ The military also

⁹Only a minority of the Sverdlovsk-class naval cruisers projected for construction were ever completed, and the Moscow ABM system was completed at two-thirds its originally intended level for launchers.

¹⁰J. M. Mackintosh, Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy, New York, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 314.

supply much of the essential expertise upon which the leadership must draw in preparing arms control policies and negotiating positions. Arms control is a broader issue area than defense needs, however, and arms control policy is influenced by political considerations such as the general state of East-West relations and the domestic political strength of the proponents of pursuing arms control talks, preeminently the current General Secretary.

The Politburo. The most authoritative Soviet body dealing with arms control is the Politburo, the topmost decision-making organ of the Soviet political system, and the most important individual leadership figure is General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, the "head" of the Politburo and a politician who likes to cast himself as a peace champion but who also has supervised a large Soviet military buildup during his tenure. The Politburo is the most powerful body of the Soviet Communist Party, and it has taken on an additional "cabinet" aspect as an organ where the interests of the most important Soviet institutions are represented and accommodated. This has been particularly true for the national security "cluster" among the top Soviet leaders: the Foreign Minister, Defense Minister, and KGB chief were simultaneously admitted to full membership in 1973.

Major arms control policies are decided in this forum, presumably in light of a broad-gauged assessment of all political as well as military and strategic considerations. Grechko's participation in these discussions probably began before the 1973-1976 period of his actual Politburo membership and marks the most direct influence by the Soviet military in final decision-making. It is hard to imagine a significant arms control decision being approved in the Politburo over his strong objection on military security grounds without a crisis in political-military relations being precipitated. This is probably a hypothetical proposition; his views would likely have been dealt with and accommodated prior to formal Politburo consideration. In view of Brezhnev's consensus-oriented style of leadership and seemingly good personal relationship with Grechko, differences would be dealt with long before this stage. While Grechko may have frequently counseled caution in arms control matters, it is not inconceivable that doubts about this issue have on occasion been more strongly expressed by other leaders. One could imagine Grechko, his ICBM and SLBM programs safely unaffected, arguing for the 1972 interim agreement on offensive weapons on military and strategic grounds and Suslov grumbling ineffectually against the accord on international political or class struggle grounds!

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The historical precedent of a Soviet state defense committee and the likely presence of all the post-Khrushchev triumvirate suggest that it may be a super-coordinating body, perhaps under the aegis of the state or perhaps not clearly designated as being under any one of the top organs of the party, government, or state. This might be more likely to be the case, however, in wartime than peacetime.

More plausibly, although still in a speculative vein, Brezhnev may have seen advantages in revivifying this body as a forum for considering defense issues, particularly SALT matters, with an eye to seizing the initiative and formulating near-final policies in a body he could more easily dominate (Grechko's support in such a maneuver would probably have been crucial). He may have at least begun this process before gaining political preeminence within the top leadership. In this way he could personally influence more heavily the final discussion and decision-taking stage in the Politburo. While political considerations introduced in the Politburo would broaden the scope of discussion, the actual policy options would be narrower than if no Defense Council stage had occurred, and by leaving the final approval up to the Politburo, the Defense Council would not actually challenge the authority of the Politburo, including its non-defense expert members

(e.g. Suslov), as the top policy-making body.¹¹

Since the probable regular members of the Defense Council are now all full Politburo members, one could consider it a subcommittee of the Politburo. Ustinov and Grechko would not have been full Politburo members when they joined, however, and it could well be expanded in wartime to include as regular members non-Politburo leaders. Also, a subgroup that includes most of the senior and most powerful Politburo members is not really a subcommittee, but more nearly (to use a Soviet term) a "presidium" of the Politburo potentially more powerful than the Politburo as a whole, at least on those issues that lie within its special competence.

This line of argument emphasizing the special importance of the Defense Council suggests that Grechko and the military were practically as influential on arms control issues before Grechko's accession to Politburo membership as afterwards. It also suggests that while the military role in this area was continuously active and substantial, it was not negative on SALT per se. Rather, once SALT shaped up in terms that the military found

¹¹ Cf. William E. Odom, "Who Controls Whom in Moscow," Foreign Policy, No. 19, Summer 1975, pp. 120-121. Colonel Odom argues the political advantages to Brezhnev of a "special state defense council" over a "subgroup of the politburo" conception for the Defense Council.

acceptable, the military, through Grechko, may have acted as Brezhnev's political ally in helping him to solidify his leadership within the Politburo by means of his successful handling of national security policies.

Other Organizations. Organizations other than the military that influence Soviet arms control policy, and with which the military both coordinates and competes, include the party Secretariat, the Foreign Ministry, the Military-Industrial Commission, the Council of Ministers, the KGB, and certain institutes in the Academy of Sciences. Generally speaking, coordination among these organizational elements takes place only at the top level in a forum such as the Defense Council or, for a matter as singularly important as SALT, possibly in a special ad hoc group under the control of the Politburo or Secretariat.¹² But in the case of SALT a more truly working level coordinating body was established between the Defense and Foreign Ministries. Although these other organizations probably deal with various aspects of arms control in the course of their business, the final discussion and decision phases take place in the Defense Council and Politburo.

¹² Speculation on the possible existence of such an organ appears in Matthew P. Gallagher and Karl F. Spielmann, Jr., Soviet Decision-making for Defense, New York, Praeger, 1972, pp. 29-30.

The academic institutes most involved in arms control studies are the Institute for World Economics and International Relations (IMEMO) and the Institute for US and Canadian Studies (IUSAC). Some retired military officers serve on the staffs of these institutes, and they and other staffers write on strategic and arms control matters, usually with a heavy dose of political or economic analysis. Some members of these institutes would seem to regard their role as that of a counterweight to the cautious approach of the military to arms control, and the impression gained from reading their published products does indicate a stance generally favorable to progress in the arms control field. But these academic writers also seem unfamiliar with the specifics of Soviet policy-making on arms control issues and probably are in a position to affect that process only in shaping generally the leadership's understanding of the external politico-military situation and of Western attitudes and intentions--an objective no doubt held by the military and KGB as well in offering their own official estimative judgments. Academic commentators depend, after all, entirely on Western sources of information not only for Western events but also for figures on relative East-West military balances and Soviet military strength. This influence, while not at all competitive with the military on technical issues, may be transmitted

fairly directly to the top political leadership. The directors of the two institutes are now both full members of the party Central Committee, and Georgiy Arbatov, director of the US Institute, appears to have occasional access to Brezhnev through the General Secretary's personal secretariat.

Recent Leadership Changes

Within the past year extraordinary changes in the topmost rank of the Soviet politico-military leadership have occurred. Defense Minister Grechko died in April 1976 and was replaced within days by Ustinov, long the party overseer of the defense industries, who was made an Army General immediately and a Marshal of the Soviet Union a few months later. Brezhnev received the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union some days after Ustinov's appointment, and special recognition of his leading role in defense policy matters was given public play. Finally, the death of Marshal Yakubovsky, Warsaw Pact Commander and a first deputy defense minister, led to the appointments of Army Generals Kulikov and Ogarkov to the posts of Warsaw Pact Commander and Chief of the General Staff, respectively, and their promotion to Marshal of the Soviet Union.

Brezhnev. Brezhnev's military promotion to Marshal of the Soviet Union shortly after Grechko's death and the

public recognition of his position as chairman of the Defense Council, first made several weeks prior to Grechko's death, would seem to mark out a new basis for Brezhnev to speak with greater authority on specifically military and defense affairs.¹³ Subsequent references to his Defense Council position and the presentation of an unusual Sword of Honor to him on his 70th birthday last December in commemoration of his defense-related personal contributions have continued this theme. His positions in political work within the MPA in 1953-1954 and in overseeing defense-related industrial efforts in the late 1950s are cited to support the claims of special experience and expertise on his behalf. Brezhnev's past behavior would not indicate that we should next expect a new volume personally authored by him setting down authoritative guidelines on Soviet military policy. On the contrary, Brezhnev's care in dealing with the military throughout his tenure as party chief is not likely to desert him now--although the possibility of a changed pattern of political actions in

¹³ It is not certain whether Brezhnev was slated to receive this promotion before Grechko's death. It is entirely possible in light of the earlier reference to the Defense Council, although it might not have been planned to come so soon. Some scanty evidence, however, points in the other direction, and the promotion of Ustinov to Army General along with his ministerial portfolio may have prompted Brezhnev to want to keep one rank up at that time. All indications point to Grechko's passing (unlike Yakubovsky's subsequent death) as being totally unexpected.

a leader of Brezhnev's age cannot be completely discounted.

Grechko's Role. A necessary prerequisite for discussing the impact of these changes on the role of the Soviet military in arms control is an understanding of the importance of Grechko's position before he died. His close career ties with Brezhnev and often judiciously balanced public views on defense policies indicate that his policy positions may have been less than the strongest voicing of any doubts or opposition held within the professional military regarding arms control proposals under top-level consideration. (To some extent this is a result of the style of public discussion, and possibly actual policy-making as well, under Brezhnev's leadership. The impression created is one of a search for consensus that puts a premium on restraint in voicing differences and enhances the job security of the participants. Fritz Ermarth writes of the leaders in the initial post-Khrushchev period as having "disarmed" themselves with respect to their public discourse.¹⁴) Indeed, in light of the importance of personal interaction among the Soviet leaders, these qualifications as much as any others may have led to his entering the Politburo. His views expressed in high-level policy

¹⁴ Fritz Ermarth, Internationalism, Security, and Legitimacy: The Challenge to Soviet Interests in East Europe, 1964-1968, Santa Monica, California, RAND, March 1969, p. 101.

discussions no doubt reflected the military's caution on arms control issues, and he probably took firm positions defending the necessity of major on-going programs for Soviet national defense and protecting them from negotiated restraints.

But Grechko served as a member of the Soviet national security policy "team" at the highest political level, and his role included the function of defending the "team's" decisions to the military and broader audiences. For example, in 1974 Grechko wrote an article on the party's leading role in military policy, listing as a "Leninist principle" the "unity of political, economic, and military leadership."¹⁵ He struck balanced tones on most issues and acknowledged that military policy fits into a larger policy framework guided by the party. While noting that the party continually recognized the need for "constant vigilance" and had supported "an extensive program to strengthen the country's defense capability," he referred to such efforts in the earlier years of the Soviet state as having included "a conscious limitation of the people's living standard," thus recognizing the social costs involved in large-scale military programs. Although it can

¹⁵ A. A. Grechko, "The Leading Role of the CPSU in the Construction of the Army in a Developed Socialist Society," Voprosy istorii KPSS, No. 5, 1974, pp. 30-47.

be argued that the current Soviet economy is able to support very large military spending along with civilian economic programs, Grechko accepted, it seems, the principle that military spending is a necessary evil, not a socially beneficial end product. In fact, Grechko seems almost to take on the mantle of Harold Brown on the topic of how allocated defense funds should be spent:

The CPSU therefore demands that army communists, workers of the defense industry, and planning organs approach every question in the sphere of armaments and combat equipment from positions of consistent and specific implementation of the economic and social policy formulated by the 24th CPSU Congress and developed in the documents of subsequent Central Committee plenums and that they insure that decisions, at whatever level they may be taken, are justified, effective, and economical. Any miscalculations in this sphere could lead to unjustified expenditure of funds and of the country's economic and manpower resources.

In the same article Grechko expressed similarly careful "team member" viewpoints on such perennial issues as the likely consequences of a nuclear war and the inevitability of war. With respect to the latter point, he justified further measures to strengthen Soviet military might on the world situation and duly cited the continuing existence of capitalism as the basis for the possible outbreak of a future war, but went on to mention the now somewhat brightened outlook resulting from the USSR's improved international position:

However, the solution of the problem of war and peace now depends not on the arbitrary

rule of imperialist circles but primarily on the new correlation of forces between imperialism, which pursues an aggressive policy, and socialism, which firmly and consistently defends a policy of peace.

Thus while Grechko defended staunchly the value of a strong Soviet military posture--indeed it is the key element underlying the new global "correlation of forces" and Grechko referred to its expanded "external function" outside Soviet borders--he did so while holding out the prospect that greater use of peaceful means also can enhance international and Soviet security.

In sum, Grechko's role in the leadership on arms control issues was probably a very influential one in view of the importance of strategic military programs and SALT during his tenure and his promotion to Politburo status, and his advice was probably cautious and protective of the military's interests on SALT issues. But Grechko occupied an awkward middle position between the military and the party as a quasi-political figure, and the tension resulting from his being simultaneously the military's highest-ranking representative in the leadership and a Brezhnev political confidant sharing responsibility for overall Soviet policies, including those on arms control, probably led Grechko to shift his viewpoint from time to time. The harder-toned views that have appeared in the Soviet military press under various names presumably reflect

differing views held within the senior ranks of the professional military by officers who were probably unhappy at times with Grechko's representation of the institutional military viewpoint in national decision-making councils.

Ustinov. The appointment of Ustinov to replace Grechko as Defense Minister probably did not gladden the hearts of those military officers who counsel conservative positions on arms control issues. While Grechko may not have been at all times the ideal military spokesman in top-level decision-making circles, in the military's view he was at least a career officer with shared experiences and personal associations tying him to his profession. Ustinov's career as a national governmental executive and party secretary has been largely devoted to the defense sector of the Soviet economy, but he has also at least formally viewed policy from the perspective of the entire national economy in the 1963-1965 period, when he headed a Supreme Economic Council. By itself, this background does not logically imply any particular personal attitude toward arms control issues or any particular degree of agreement or disagreement with the uniformed military regarding such issues. But the career military has lost the direct representation on the Politburo that it enjoyed for the 1973-1976 period. Although

top-level meetings regarding defense or SALT matters still undoubtedly include professional military representation, the Minister of Defense has traditionally been the leading spokesman on behalf of the military at this level, and the authority of that post is now exercised by a non-military figure.

Ustinov's long association with defense programs may well incline him to be a strong defender of such programs, particularly those already under way that were decided upon under his supervision as a party secretary.¹⁶ His knowledge of Soviet arms programs could make him especially effective in dealing with the military's positions about the worth of specific weapons systems and how arms control proposals ought to be shaped in light of existing Soviet programs, were he inclined to make such arguments. (This factor would seem to be more pertinent to SALT, where the characteristics of weapons systems are relatively more important than they are in MDEF.) At the same time, this expertise could also make him particularly adept at shaping shrewd bargaining positions to be presented to the West in talks, and he could well turn out to be a particularly

¹⁶ No announcement of Ustinov's relinquishing his secretarial post has been made. Yakov Ryabov, who addressed the DOSAAF congress in January of this year and who was appointed a Central Committee secretary in October 1976, formerly had responsibilities as Sverdlovsk provincial party boss that make him a logical candidate to take over Ustinov's secretarial duties. Perhaps he has already done so.

tough spokesman if he were personally to be present at the negotiating table. Also, to the extent that the professional military moderated their positions or swallowed their objections regarding arms control issues in the Grechko period precisely because their leader was a military man, they may feel freer now to put forward their views more strongly in order to compensate for their loss of professional influence in national policy councils.

Ogarkov. Insofar as strategic arguments affect Soviet positions on SALT or other arms control issues, greater influence may fall to the General Staff because the present Defense Minister is not a professional military officer. The replacement of Kulikov by Ogarkov as chief of this body seems to augur well for a positive Soviet approach in SALT. The extent and nature of Kulikov's actual role regarding SALT when he headed the General Staff is not known to Western observers, although he rather seems to be a conservative military figure. In any case his move to the Warsaw Pact command takes him away from a particularly critical central Moscow post (he of course remains a first deputy minister and retains an influential voice). Ogarkov's familiarity with SALT does not in itself mean he is "pro-SALT" in the sense of avidly seeking areas of possible agreement. But he at least probably accepts the process of negotiating seriously

on arms control and of reaching agreements that serve Soviet security interests.

Marshal Ogarkov has also written in traditional terms on military issues. But his direct involvement in SALT as the second-ranking member of the Soviet delegation during the first three sessions of SALT I, combined with his probable continuing major SALT responsibilities subsequently, has likely given him a particularly good understanding of both the specifics of SALT issues and their relationship to broader Soviet defense policies and programs. His direct exposure to discussions with US negotiators may even stand him in good stead in wielding the weight of his new position in internal Soviet debates. Ironically, he inherits the legacy of Kulikov's strong arguments favoring a vigorous leading role for the General Staff in shaping Soviet military policy, but he may use it in support of policy preferences somewhat different from those Kulikov would have chosen.¹⁷

¹⁷ Kulikov cannot have been happy that his former subordinate received Marshal status upon becoming Chief of the General Staff, a post Kulikov held for years without acquiring that rank. It is also interesting, although probably inconsequential, that Brezhnev and Ustinov hold "time in grade" advantage over Kulikov and Ogarkov.

Conclusions

The Military's Attitude toward Arms Control. The reasons underlying the military's concern over arms control are readily enough understood. Although the military's main role as the defender of Soviet national security remains intact, military force levels, numbers and types of weapons, and the amount spent for defense are now subject to possible restrictions imposed by arms control measures reached in agreement with other countries. Thus arms control is felt by the Soviet military to be a threat to some aspects of their professional interests. The Soviet military probably already feel that SALT has brought about increased pressures for control by the political leadership over the military and that these pressures will increase if arms control comes to enjoy more attention and success.

Part of the natural caution of the Soviet military regarding arms control is rooted in a strong urge to protect military secrets, which are defined in Moscow more broadly than in the West. One of the asymmetries of the strategic dialogue is that the US supplies the essential data upon which both sides rely in arms control negotiations. Marshal Ogarkov once felt so uneasy on this score during SALT that he asked privately that the US side not discuss Soviet military technical issues so specifically in

sessions where Soviet civilian negotiators were present.¹⁸

Yet arms control is not a simple and one-sided issue in terms of its impact on the Soviet military. The arms control measures of the last twenty years would seem not to have eroded the military's mission or essential position in Soviet society or politics. On the contrary, Soviet military force programs give every appearance of being vigorous virtually across the board, and new claims for the utility of military power abroad in support of Soviet foreign policy have been advanced.

Even more far-reaching arms control than has thus far occurred is not without some possible advantages to the Soviet military, although little is known about the extent to which they perceive or will come to perceive them. For one thing, arms control can reduce the uncertainties which the Soviet military must consider and plan for. In addition, the funds not spent on a weapon because of an arms control prohibition may be used for other military purposes which parts of the military establishment may very much desire.

The effects of the Soviet military's experience with respect to SALT can only be estimated. The military's influence on Soviet positions may have served to delay or

¹⁸ John Newhouse, Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973, p. 192.

even block some areas of agreement. But it has obviously not prevented the two sides from reaching some significant agreements, significant in military as well as political terms. Over the longer term the active and direct participation of the military may serve somewhat to alter military attitudes toward the value of negotiations and agreements and even toward the adversary. Even if, in fact perhaps especially if, the military affect substantially the final terms of an agreement and take direct part at all stages in its negotiation, a degree of responsibility for and specific interest in the product is created. To the extent this is true, arms control becomes less a bête noire and more an ordinary, if still somewhat novel, aspect of the military's business.

A Look Ahead. The recent changes in the topmost level of the Soviet politico-military leadership would seem, in their broadest implication, to set the stage for possible progress in arms control:

- Brezhnev is politically strong, seemingly secure within the Politburo and Central Committee and preeminent--though not domineering--among the top leadership. While independent voices remain to speak up in restraint of his authority (probably Suslov in particular), none are placed so as to carry special weight on arms control matters.
- Brezhnev has successfully expanded the basis of his personal authority in the national security field. His signature alone, as General Secretary, on the SALT I agreements demonstrated his ability to speak on behalf

of the nation on major international arms control agreements, and the special competence asserted on his behalf in the past year regarding defense affairs further strengthens his leadership role.

- A non-military Defense Minister, who was rumored to have been Brezhnev's preferred choice for the post in 1967 and who has been a subordinate to Brezhnev for more than ten years in the Secretariat, now represents the military on the Politburo. Renewed emphasis on party control within and over the military has marked public commentary during his tenure.
- The General Staff is led by a professional military officer who is familiar with SALT issues and accustomed to serious consideration of possible areas of agreement.

Any evaluation of this prospect, however, must remain cautiously tentative because the more specific implications of these shifts for arms control are difficult--if not simply impossible--to tell. (One does not know, for example, what attitude Marshal Ogarkov may now hold about the value of cruise missiles. Despite possibly having a general willingness to see the USSR negotiate on arms control with the US, he might feel this particular issue is one where no Soviet concessions are justified and therefore become a formidable opponent of a proposed SALT agreement "bypassing" this issue.) Caution in estimating what impact these changes will have on arms control talks is further recommended by the unsettled

nature of the entire political relationship between the USSR and the West. Even if "linkage" is rejected by both sides as an explicit conceptual basis for their policies toward each other, the effects of future events in a number of possible areas may intrude into the arena of arms control talks.

Judgments about the relationship between the Soviet military and arms control should also be tempered by a recognition of the uncertain future of arms control. The problems that lie ahead in this field may prove more difficult to resolve than those that have thus far been the primary subjects of mutual concern. Dealing with possible actual reductions, monitoring compliance of future agreements, and greater accounting for alliance or third-country considerations would likely pose new strains on Soviet political-military relations and specifically on the military's attitude toward and role in arms control.

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